

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson.

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MISCELLANY.

AN EXECUTION BY THE INQUISITION.

The following affecting sketch is from Marryatt's "Phantom Ship," just republished here by Coyle's, 104, Beekman street. The heroine of the story, Amine Vanderdecken, is condemned to the stake by the Inquisition, in consequence of her attempting some childish plantasmagoric experiments, which are construed into sorcery by father Mathias, to whose care she has been committed by her loving and believing husband, then absent on a long sea voyage. It pictures the horrors of the Inquisition of a more vivid light than we remember to have seen before.

A few hours after Amine had been in her condemned dungeon, the jailors entered without speaking to her; they took down her soft silk hair and cut it off. Amine, with the lip curled in contempt and without resistance or expostulation, allowed them to do their work. They then ordered her to bare her feet, when for the first time she looked into their faces. "If you do not we must," observed one of them who was moved by her youth and beauty. Amine did as she was desired, and was again left to her solitude.

Although to-morrow was to end all Amine's hopes and fears—all her short happiness—her suspense and misery—yet Amine slept till her last slumber in this world was disturbed by the unlocking and unbaring of the door of her cell, and the appearance of the head jailor with a light. Amine started up—she had been dreaming of her husband—of happiness! There stood the jailor, with a dress in his hand, which he desired she would put on. He lighted a lamp for her and left her alone. The dress was of black serge, with white stripes.

Amine put on the dress, and threw herself down on the bed, trying if possible to recall the dream from which she had been awakened, but in vain. Two hours passed away and the jailor again entered, and summoned her to follow him. Perhaps one of the most appalling customs of the inquisition is, that after the accusation, whether the accused parties confess their guilt or not they return to their dungeons without the least idea of what may have been their sentence, and when summoned on the morning of the execution they are equally kept in ignorance.

The prisoners were all summoned by the jailors from the various dungeons and led into a large hall, where they found their fellow sufferers collected.

In this spacious, dimly lighted hall were to be seen two hundred men, standing up for support, against the walls, all dressed in the same black and white serge. So motionless were they that if it had not been for the rolling of their eyes, as they watched the jailors who passed and repassed, you might have imagined them petrified. It was the agony of suspense worse than the agony of death. After a time a wax candle about five feet long, was put in the hands of each prisoner and then some were ordered to put on over their dresses the *Sanbenitos*,—others the *Samiras*! Those who re-

ceived these dresses, with flames painted on them, gave themselves up for lost and it was dreadful to perceive the anguish of each individual as the dresses were one by one brought forward, and with the heavy drops of perspiration on his brow, he watched with terror lest one should be presented to him. All was doubt, fear and horror.

But the prisoners in the Hall were not those who were to suffer death. Those who wore the *Sanbenitos* had to walk in the procession and receive but slight punishment; those who wore the *Samiras* had been condemned but had been saved from the consuming fire, by acknowledgment of their offence; the flames painted on their dresses were reversed, and signified that they were not to suffer; but this the unfortunate wretch did not know, and the horrors of a cruel death started them in the face!

Another hall similar to the one in which the men had been collected; was occupied by female culprits: the same ceremonies were observed—the same doubt, fear, and agony were depicted upon every countenance. But there was a third chamber, smaller than the other two, and this chamber had been reserved for those who had been sentenced, and who were to suffer at the stake. It was into this chamber that Amine was led and there she found seven other prisoners dressed in the same manner as herself; two only were Europeans, the other five were negro slaves. Each of these had their confessors with them, and were earnestly listening to his exhortation. A monk approached Amine but she waved him away with her hand; he looked at her spot on the floor and cursed her. The head jailor now made his appearance with the dresses for those who were in this chamber these were *Samiras*, only different from the others, inasmuch as the flames were painted on them upward instead of down. These dresses were of gray stuff loose, like a waggoner's frock: at the lower part of them both before and behind; was painted the likeness of the wearer, that is, the face only, resisting upon a burning faggot and surrounded with flames and demons. Under the portrait was written the crime for which the party suffered. Sugar loaf caps with flames painted on them, were also brought and put on their heads, and the long wax candles were placed in their hands.

Amine and the others condemned being arrayed in these dresses, remained in the chambers for some hours before it was time for the procession to commence, for they had been all summoned up by the jailors at about two o'clock in the morning.

The sun rose brilliantly, much to the joy of the members of the Holy office, who would not have the day obscured on which they were to vindicate the honor of the church, and prove how they acted up to the old doctrines of our Saviour; those of charity, good will, forbearing one another, forgiving one another.

The prisoners were then all conducted in procession to the Cathedral, the grand altar of which was hung with black cloth, and lighted up with thousand of tapers. On one side of it was a throne for the grand Inquisition or the other a raised platform for the Viceroy of God and his suite. The center aisle had benches for the prisoners, and the god fathers; the other portion of the procession falling off to the right and left, to the side aisle and they mixing for the time with the spectators. As the prisoners entered the Cathedral, they were led into their seats, those least guilty sitting nearest to the altar, and those who were condemned to the stake being placed the farther from it.

The bleeding Amine tottered to her seat and longed for the home which was to sever her from a Christian world. She thought not of herself, nor if what she was to suffer; she thought but of Philip; of his being safe from these merciful creatures, of the happiness of dying first, and of meeting him again in bliss.

Amine had not taken her seat in the Cathedral more than a few seconds, when

overpowered by her feelings and by fatigue she fell back in a swoon.

Did no one step forward to assist her? to raise her up, and offer her restoratives? No—not one. Hundreds would have done so, but they dared not, she was an outcast, excommunicated, abandoned, and lost; and should any one moved by compassion for a suffering fellow creature, have ventured to raise her up would have been looked upon with suspicion, and most probably have been arraigned and have had to settle the affair of conscience with the Holy Inquisition.

After a short time two of the officers of the Inquisition went to Amine and raised her again in her seat, and she recovered sufficiently to enable her to retain her posture.

A sermon was then preached by a Dominican monk, in which he portrayed the tender mercies, the paternal love of the holy office. He compared the inquisition to the ark of Noah, out of which all the animals walked after the deluge, but with this difference highly in favor of the holy office, that the animals went forth from the ark no better than they went in, whereas those who had gone into the inquisition with all the cruelty of disposition, and with the hearts of wolves, came out as mild and patient as lambs.

The public accuser then mounted the pulpit and read from it all the crimes of those who had been condemned and the punishments which they were to undergo. Each prisoner, as the sentence was read, was brought forward to the pulpit by the officers to hear their sentence, standing up, with their wax candles lighted in their hands.—As soon as the sentences of all those whose lives were spared were read, the Grand Inquisitor put on his priestly robes, and followed by several others, took off from them the ban of excommunication (which they were supposed to have fallen under) by throwing holy water on them with a small broom.

As soon as this portion of the ceremony was over, those who were condemned to suffer, and the effigies of those who had escaped by death, were brought up one by one and their sentence read; the winding up of the condemnation of all was in the same words, that the holy Inquisition found it impossible on account of their hardness of their hearts and the magnitude of their crimes to pardon them. With great concern it handed them over to secular justice to undergo the penalty of the laws; exhorting the authorities at the same time to show clemency and mercy toward the unhappy wretches, and if they must suffer death that all events it might be without the *spilling of blood!* What mockery was this apparent intercession, no to shed blood, when to comply with their request, they substituted the agony and the torment at the stake!

Amine was the last who was led forward to the pulpit, which was fixed against one of the massive columns of the centre aisle close to the throne occupied by the Grand Inquisitor.

"You, Amine Vanderdecken," cried the public accuser. At this moment an unusual bustle was heard in the crowd under the pulpit, there was struggle and expostulation; and the officers raised their wands for order and decorum—but it continued.

"You Amine Vanderdecken, being accused—"

Another violent struggle and from the crowd darted a young man, who rushed to where Amine was standing and caught her in his arms.

"Philip! Philip!" screamed Amine falling on his bosom; as he caught her, the cap of flames fell off her head and rolling along the marble pavement.

"My Amine—my wife—my adored one—is it thus we meet? My Lord; she is innocent." "Stand off men, continued the officers of the Inquisition, who would have torn them asunder. "Stand off or your lives shall answer for it."

This threat of the officers, and the defiance of all rules were not to be borne, the whole Cathedral was in commotion, and the solemnity of the ceremony was short to be compromised. The Viceroy and his follow-

ers had risen from their chairs to observe what was passing, and the crowd was pressing on when the grand inquisitor gave directions and other officers hastened to the assistance of the two who had led Amine forward and proceeded to disengage her from Philip's arms. The struggle was severe. Philip appeared to be endowed with the strength of twenty men; and it was some minutes before they could separate them, and when they had done so, his struggles were dreadful.

Amine, also, held by two of the familiars, shrieked as she attempted once more, but in vain, to rush into her husband's arms.—At last, by a tremendous effort, Philip released, he sunk down helpless of the pavement: the exertion had caused a bursting of a blood vessel and he lay without motion.

"Oh God! Oh God! they have killed him—monsters—murderers—let me embrace him but once more," cried Amine frantically.

A priest now stepped forward—it was father Mathias—with sorrow in his countenance he desired some of the bystanders to carry out Philip Vanderdecken; and Philip, in a state of insensibility, was borne away from the sight of Amine, the blood streaming from his mouth.

Amine's sentence was read—she heard it not, her brain was bewildered. She was led back to her seat, and then it was that all her courage, all her constancy and fortitude gave way; and during the remainder of the ceremony she filled the Cathedral with her hysterical sobbing, all entreaties or threats were alike lost upon her.

All was now over except the last and most tragical scene of the drama. The culprits who had been spared were led back to the Inquisitor by their god-fathers, and those who had been sentenced were taken down on the bank of the river to suffer. It was on a large open space, on the left of the Custom House, that this ceremony was to be gone through. As in the Cathedral, raised thrones were prepared for the Grand Inquisitor and the Viceroy, who in state headed the procession; followed by an immense concourse of people: Thirteen stakes had been set up, eight for the living five for the dead. The executioners were sitting on, or standing by the piles of wood and faggots, waiting for their victims. Amine could not walk; she was at first supported by the familiars, and then carried by them to the stake which had been assigned for her.—When they put her on her feet opposite to it, her courage seemed to revive she walked boldly up, folded her arms and leaned against it.

The executioners now commenced their office: the chains were passed around Amine's body—the wood and faggots piled around her. The same preparations had been made with all the other culprits.

The confessors stood by the side of each victim. Amine waved her hand indignantly to those who approached her, when Father Mathias almost breathless made his appearance from the crowd, through which he had forced his way.

"Amine Vanderdecken—unhappy woman! had you been counselled by me this would not have been. Now it is too late, but not too late to save your soul. Away then with this obstinacy—this hardness of heart: call upon the blessed Saviour that he may receive your spirit—call upon his wounds for mercy. It is the eleventh hour, but not too late. Amine," continued the old man with tears, "I implore I conjure you. At least may this load of trouble be taken from my heart."

"Unhappy woman, you say?" replied she "say rather unhappy priest, for Amine's sufferings will be over while you must still endure the torments of the damned. Unhappy was the day when my husband rescued you from death. Still more unhappy the compassion which prompted him to offer you an asylum and a refuge, and received you into his family. Unhappy the knowledge of you from the first day to the last. I leave you to your conscience, if conscience you retain—nor would I change this cruel

death for the pangs which you in your future life will suffer. Leave me—I die in the faith of my forefathers and scorn a creed that warrants such a scene as this."

"Amine Vanderdecken," cried the priest on his knees, clasping his hands in agony.

"Leave me father."

"There is but a minute left—for the love of God."

"I tell you then, leave—that minute is my own."

Father Mathias turned away in despair, and the tears coursed down the old man's cheeks, as Amine said, his misery was extreme.

The head executioner now inquired of the confessors whether the culprits died in the true faith? It was answered in the affirmative, a rope was passed round their necks twisted to the stake, so that they were strangled before the fire was kindled. All the other culprits had died in this manner; and the head executioner enquired of Father Mathias whether Amine had a claim to so much mercy. The old priest answered not, but shook his head.

The executioner turned away. After a moments pause, Father Mathias followed him and seized him by the arm, saying in a faltering voice, "Let her not suffer long."

The Grand Inquisitor gave the signal and the fires were all lighted at the same moment. In compliance with the request of the priest, the executioner had thrown a quantity of wet straw upon Amine's pile, which threw up a dense smoke before it burst into flames.

"Mother! mother! I come to thee!" were the last words heard from Amine's lips.

The flames soon raged furiously, ascending high above the top of the stake to which she had been chained. Gradually they sunk down; and only when the burning embers covered the ground a few fragments of bones hanging on the chain were all that remained of the once peerless and high-minded Amine.

A FRENCH DUEL.

A true story, on which to found a novel.

Hilaire and Ernest were school-fellows and friends; both entered the French military service; the former became an officer of infantry, the latter a lancer. On the occasion, having obtained two months leave of absence from their respective corps, Hilaire invited Ernest to his mother's country house at the foot of Pyrenees, for the purpose of shooting and otherwise, agreeably spending their short respite from garrison duty. Hilaire had a sister, young and beautiful, and the brother, was not long in perceiving that an attachment was forming between her and the gay lancer. Fearing that this attachment if allowed to have its own free course, would not prove advantageous for his sister, Hilaire proposed to Ernest, some time before the expiration of their leave to spend the remainder of it in Paris. Ernest replied, I know why you make this proposal: you have discovered that Louise and myself are attached to each other, and you want to separate us. My views are honorable; I hope one day to make her my wife. Your family are Republican, mine are of the old Noblesse—but I hope to be able to induce my friends to agree to the union.

Hilaire felt assured that Ernest's intentions were correct, and after a time the friends returned to their regiments. Hardly had Hilaire rejoined his corps, than his mother wrote to inform him that Louise was *enroute* by Ernest. Hilaire flew to him, and upbraided him, at the same time urging him to save the honor of his family by immediately marrying Louise. Ernest protested that it was his intention to do so—that he had been urging his friends to consent to his marriage into a Republican family—yet he was unable to obtain the consent. That an aged relative, whose heir he was, had apparently not long to live—he could not survive three years—but whether he did so or not, at the end of that time he solemnly promised to fulfil the pledge to Louise. Hilaire could get no bet- at the end of the three years, the mother